



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



TO:

Superintendents of Schools
Directors of Endowed and Incorporated Academies
Directors of Approved Private Special Education Facilities
Directors of Regional Educational Service Centers
Directors of Public Charter and Magnet Schools
Personnel and Human Resource Directors

FROM:

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Bureau of Educator Standards and Certification

DATE:

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SUBJECT:

Qualifications for Instructors of American Sign Language (ASL) for World Language High School Credit

In 2011, the Connecticut General Assembly passed an amendment to C.G.S. Section 10-16b permitting local and regional boards of education to offer American Sign Language (ASL) for world language high school credit. Furthermore, the law also permits local and regional boards of education to employ non-certified instructors of ASL provided that:

- the ASL course is taught by a qualified instructor; and
- the instructor is under the supervision of a teacher who holds a valid certificate.

Section 10-16b Prescribed courses of study. (a) In the public schools the program of instruction offered shall include at least the following subject matter, as taught by legally qualified teachers, the arts; career education; consumer education; health and safety, including, but not limited to, human growth and development, nutrition, first aid, disease prevention, community and consumer health, physical, mental and emotional health, including youth suicide prevention, substance abuse prevention, safety, which may include the dangers of gang membership, and accident prevention; language arts, including reading, writing, grammar, speaking and spelling; mathematics; physical education; science; social studies, including, but not limited to, citizenship, economics, geography, government and history; and in addition, on at least the secondary level, one or more world languages and vocational education. **For purposes of this subsection, world languages shall include American Sign Language, provided such subject matter is taught by a qualified instructor under the supervision of a teacher who holds a certificate issued by the State Board of Education.** For purposes of this subsection, the "arts" means any form of visual or performing arts, which may include, but not be limited to, dance, music, art and theatre.

Since the fall of 2011, the Connecticut State Department of Education (Department) has been working with a stakeholder group to determine how to ensure an instructor of ASL is "qualified." The Department, with the consensus of the stakeholder group, has elected to use a specific assessment of ASL skills to determine qualification.

Starting April 2014, the Department will offer the first administration of the **Praxis Assessment of Signed Communication-American Sign Language (Praxis-ASL)** exam in Connecticut on Saturday, April 19, 2014. Connecticut has already identified and provided training for two in-state ASL experts to serve as interviewers in this assessment process.

Because this is the initial year of testing, the Department has designated it as a “pilot” year, meaning that those who register and take the Praxis-ASL test will be part of a “pilot” and no minimum passing score will be required. After one year of testing, the Department, with the participation of a standard setting committee, will establish a minimum passing score that will become effective in the 2015-16 school year.

To clarify, this testing requirement would be applied to any non-certified or certified teacher whom your district wishes to employ as an instructor of ASL as a world language that results in high school credit. Certified teachers who are currently authorized to teach ASL as a world language include those holding the following endorsements:

- Hearing Impaired PK-12 endorsement (#057); or
- Other World Language –ASL endorsement (#024).

However, the superintendent has the option of requiring teachers who hold the above certification endorsements (#057 or #024) to take and pass the ASL test.

All other certified teachers who wish to teach ASL for world language credit will be required to take the new **Praxis Assessment of Signed Communication-American Sign Language (Praxis-ASL)** exam.

For the Praxis ASL test, certification candidates and prospective ASL instructors may register through the Educational Testing Service (ETS) Praxis website:
http://www.ets.org/praxis/ct/asc_asl/

If you have any questions, please feel free to call Georgette Nemr at 860-713-6716 or e-mail her at georgette.nemr@ct.gov.

Thank you for your attention to this important information.

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